Local Government Association

Heads of Communications Survey 2017

December 2017

To view more research from the Local Government Association's Research and Information team please visit: http://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-intelligence

Contents

Foreword

Welcome to our 2017 Heads of Communications survey; our annual temperature check of the issues affecting council communicators. I hope the results provide you with some useful benchmarking data for your own team as well as an insight into the ambitions, priorities and challenges facing communicators across local government.

It's fair to say that 2017 presented local government communicators with some exceptionally difficult challenges. The Grenfell Tower fire tragedy and terrorist atrocities in Manchester and London required timely and sensitive engagement with local communities who had been devastated by the terrible events.

It is perhaps not surprising given all that happened last year that the survey highlights the need for ever-collaborative, multi-agency working and shows that there is a real appetite for closer working with partners. 70 per cent of those who responded said that they are intending to work more closely with colleagues in partner organisations in the coming twelve months. It's really encouraging that council communicators recognise the need for greater collaboration between the services that support local people. A more integrated, place-based approach to communications is something I have long highlighted as an opportunity to improve place-based communications, focused around people not institutions. With half of respondents already working with partner organisations, 72 per cent running joint campaigns and 58 per cent with mutual aid arrangements in place, there has been real progress over the last year.

This year's events have also illustrated the need for councils to position communications as a key strategic service. Rebuilding trust, and supporting communities with the recovery after major incidents requires careful handling and communication professionals play a key role for their council. However, we are still seeing communications relegated to a service that reacts to events rather than part of a strategic function at the managerial and political top of the organisation.

This year's survey suggests that as a profession, we still have some way to go before communications occupies a 'seat at the top table'. Just 35 per cent of respondents sit on their organisation's corporate or senior management team, with only 25 per cent reporting to the chief executive. Although reporting lines don't necessarily matter, it shows that we still have work to do to demonstrate our strategic value. By creating proactive, effective strategic communications and delivering outcome and impact-focused campaigns that deliver real results, we can show the value we can add. Over the coming year we will also be working with colleagues across the communications industry and local government more broadly to explore how we as an organisation can help set out what good communication should look like in 2018.

Within councils themselves our survey shows that communication teams continue to be engaged in the full range of modern communication activities. Almost all respondents indicated that the corporate communication teams handle media relations, crisis communication, web, digital and social media communication, internal communication, reputation management and campaigns and marketing.

Most teams are making use of social media platforms such as Twitter (99 per cent) and Facebook (96 per cent) to engage with their communities and residents, with 62 per cent highlighting that developing digital skills will be a priority for their teams next year. These are obviously important channels but are only a small part of the range of options open to us. Are we communicating with residents in the ways they want us to? Running a 'who reads what' survey can be a particularly effective way of ensuring that you understand how your residents are getting information and how they would prefer to receive it. You can find more guidance on how to run a 'who reads what' survey can be found here.

Resident engagement was cited as a priority for just over half of respondents (55 per cent). With changes to services necessitating greater collaboration between councils and local people to change behaviours, it is vital that councils are engaging residents in decision-making. Interestingly, this year's survey found that the biggest priority for communication teams for the next 12 months is the reputation of their organisation. Issues such as how satisfied residents are with their local area, how informed residents feel and how responsive they find the council are all key drivers for protecting and elevating a council's reputation. But how do we know what residents think of us? Many councils are still not asking residents for their views or undertaking regular surveys. You can find more information on running effective, cost-effective residents' surveys in our understanding the views of residents' toolkit.

It's great to see that there is good awareness of our communications support, with nearly three quarters of councils taking up some form of communications support over the last year. Case studies and online resources were cited as the most useful form of support along with training and professional development, events and seminars. We will be looking to further develop our online CommsHub and are already exploring ways that we can collaborate with communication practitioners beyond local government to learn, share best practice and further professionalise our industry. We will keep you posted on further developments.

David Holdstock
Director of Communications
Local Government Association

Summary

Background

In October 2017 the LGA conducted a survey of council Heads of Communications in England and achieved a response rate of 49 per cent. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on the current state of local government communications at the local authority level and to enable benchmarking on issues such as size and structure of communications teams, budgets and future strategies.

The survey asked about a range of topics including length of service within local government, workforce characteristics, membership of professional organisations, and where Heads of Communications reported to. It also explored issues including the types of campaigns that communications teams conduct, the channels they use and the level of awareness that Heads of Communications had about the support available from the LGA. The survey questionnaire is shown in Annex B.

Key findings

- Two thirds (62 per cent) of Heads of Communications in respondent councils were female, most (95 per cent) were from a white English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British ethnic background and just over half (56 per cent) were 35-49 years old;

- On average, respondent Heads of Communications had been working in local government communications for 11 years;

- A third (34 per cent) were members of LGcommunications, a quarter (24 per cent) were members of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), six per cent were members of the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) and a tenth (11 per cent) belonged to other professional organisations;

- On average, 8.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were working in corporate communications teams in respondent authorities;

- 54 per cent of respondents had staff performing core communications functions in other parts of their council, with the average number of staff involved in this being 3.4 FTE;

- 70 per cent of respondent Heads of Communications reported to a service head or director and a quarter (25 per cent) reported to the chief executive;

- A third (35 per cent) of Heads of Communications in respondent councils sit on their council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent;

- The average non-staffing budget for corporate communications was c£140,000 and it ranged from c£42,000 in shire districts to c£367,000 in metropolitan districts;

- Almost all corporate communications teams in respondent councils covered media relations (98 per cent), Crisis/emergency communications (97 per cent), web/digital/social media communications (96 per cent), internal communications (95 per cent), reputation management (94 per cent), and campaign and marketing (91 per cent);

- 62 per cent of Heads of Communications identified digital skills as a priority area of professional development for their communications team over the next 12 months, other areas identified were video skills (56 per cent) and evaluation and insight (48 per cent).

- 28 per cent of respondent councils will have their non-staffing budgets reduced in 2018/19. The proportion facing reductions was lowest for shire districts at 12 per cent and highest among shire counties at 69 per cent;

- 56 per cent of communications teams in respondent authorities were planning to generate income in 2018/19, mainly through advertising revenue or providing their services commercially to other organisations;

- 58 per cent carried advertising as a source of income generation, a third (35 per cent) in council publications, a quarter (25 per cent) on roundabouts and 12 per cent on their website. Of these just over half (54 per cent) said it had met their expectations;

- Half (48 per cent) of respondents regularly work closely with their counterparts in partner organisations such as police, fire or Clinical Commissioning Group. A quarter (26 per cent) did so sometimes, 18 per cent when necessary and four per cent, infrequently. Most commonly this was on joint campaigns (72 per cent), regular meetings (68 per cent) and mutual aid during crisis (59 per cent).

- Looking forward, 70 per cent of respondent communications teams intend to work more closely with partner organisations in the coming twelve months;

- 60 per cent of respondents' organisations had a corporate narrative and a third (34 per cent) had an annual campaign plan signed off by their senior leadership. The most common themes for these were waste/recycling, health and wellbeing, economic development/growth and fostering;

- Almost all (99 per cent) respondents use Twitter to share news and information with residents, 96 per cent use Facebook and stories in local media while three-quarters (74 per cent) use face to face meetings;

- Digital analytics are used by more than half (54 per cent) of respondents to evaluate the effectiveness/impact of their communications channels and/or campaigns, around a quarter (23 per cent) use behaviour change/take up, while both surveys and media monitoring were used a fifth (21 per cent);

- Half (49 per cent) of respondents conduct a residents' or reputational survey, of these, a third (36 per cent) conducted their survey annually and 29 per cent did it every two years. 77 per cent carried it out themselves while 46 per cent used an independent polling company. A fifth (18 per cent) upload the results of their survey to LG Inform, the LGA's online benchmarking tool;

- Two fifths (41 per cent) of respondents who did not conduct a survey reported that this was because it was too expensive;

- Two-thirds (64 per cent) of respondents indicated organisation reputation as one of their three main communications priorities, just over half chose (55 per cent) resident engagement while behaviour change and economic development were both cited by 38 per cent of respondents;

- 89 per cent of respondents were aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils and of these three quarters (74 per cent) had used it in the last 12 months;

- Four-fifths (82 per cent) of those who had used LGA support were satisfied with the service provided. A third (31 per cent) identified ease of communication as the most positive aspect of the support they received while 10 per cent found bespoke support the least positive aspect;

- The types of communications support chosen by respondents as being most useful over the next twelve months were studies/online resources (44 per cent), training/professional development (41 per cent) and events/seminars (40 per cent).

Methodology

The survey was conducted online during Autumn 2017 via a link sent to Heads of Communications, or their nearest equivalent, in councils and combined fire authorities, i.e. those not connected with county councils, with LGA membership. This was followed up with a reminder a few weeks later. Of the 349 councils in membership, 30 have a shared communications function, so only one response was requested or accepted from these councils, thereby reducing their number to 334. Therefore the overall potential number of participants including fire authorities was 366, of which 179 took part in the survey, giving a response rate of 49 per cent. A breakdown of responses by type of organisation shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses by council type	Number	Per cent
Shire County	13	48
Shire District	83	45
London Borough	13	43
Metropolitan District	15	42
Unitary Authority	37	66
Combined Fire Authority	18	56
Total	179	49

Base = 366

It should be noted that some respondents did not answer all of the questions in the survey so within this report some of the findings are based on different numbers of respondents, this number (the base) is shown below all tables.

Where the response base is less than 50, figures can be skewed due to the small sample size and care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore, where this is the case in this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

Survey Findings

The survey asked respondents about their characteristics in relation to gender, ethnic background and age group. Two thirds (62 per cent) were female and most (95 per cent) were from a white English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ethnic background. Just over half (56 per cent) were 35-49 years old while a third were in the 50-64 years age group. A full breakdown of these findings are shown in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 2: Gender of respondents	Number	Per cent
Male	67	38
Female	109	62
Prefer not to say	0	0

Base = 176

Table 3: Ethnic background of respondents	Number	Per cent
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	168	95
Irish	1	1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	1
Any other White background	4	2
White and Black Caribbean	0	0
White and Black African	0	0
White and Asian	0	0
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0	0
Indian	1	1
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
Any other Asian background	0	0
African	0	0
Caribbean	0	0
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0	0
Arab	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0
Prefer not to say	2	1

Base = 177

Table 4: Age group of respondents		
	Number	**Per cent**
Under 25 years	0	0
25-34 years	18	10
35-49 years	97	56
50-64 years	54	31
65 years or over	0	0
Prefer not to say	3	2

Base = 174

Overall, the average number of years respondents had worked in local government communications was 11 and the median was 10. Those in fire authorities had been in local government communications for the shortest length of time with an average of 10 years' service and a median of eight, while those in London boroughs were the longest serving with an average of 15 and median of 12 years. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Years worked in local government communications by type of authority		
	Average	**Median**
Shire County	10	10
Shire District	11	9
London Borough	15	12
Metropolitan District	12	10
Unitary Authority	10	9
Combined Fire Authority	10	8
All	11	10

Base = 174

Over half (59 per cent) of respondents were a member of one or more professional communications organisations, while 41 per cent did not belong to any. A third (34 per cent) of respondents were members of LGcommunications, 24 per cent were members of CIPR, six per cent were members of PRCA while 11 per cent belonged to other professional organisations as shown in Table 6. Those who reported that they were members of other organisations were asked to specify these, a list of the answers provided is shown in Table A1 in Annex A.

Table 6: Membership of professional organisations		
	Number	**Per cent**
LGcommunications	61	34
PRCA	10	6
CIPR	43	24
Other organisation	20	11
None	73	41

Base = 179 Note: 26 belonged to more than one organisation.

Respondents were asked how many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were working in their council's corporate communications team performing core functions at 1 October 2017. Core functions were defined as:

- media relations;
- crisis communications;
- campaigns and marketing;
- reputation management;
- internal communications;
- print/design; and
- web/digital/social media communications.

The overall average number of staff was 8.3 FTE and the median number was 5.7 FTE. Shire counties had the highest number of staff with an average of 21 FTE and a median of 22 FTE while shire districts had the lowest with an average of 3.7 FTE and a median of 3 FTE. It should be noted that not all teams deliver all the core functions listed above, and that core functions may not encompass the same activities in all councils. As a guide, the overall ratio of staff to population was 0.37 FTE per ten thousand population, this figure ranged from 0.06 FTE in combined fire authorities to 0.63 FTE in unitary authorities. A complete breakdown of these figures is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Numbers and ratio of staff employed in councils' corporate communications teams at 1st October 2017			
	Average	Median	Ratio*
Shire County	21.0	22.0	0.26
Shire District	3.7	3.0	0.30
London Borough	14.4	11.0	0.55
Metropolitan District	17.4	15.0	0.50
Unitary Authority	10.4	8.0	0.63
Combined Fire Authority	4.6	4.0	0.06
All	8.3	5.7	0.37

Base = 171 *Average per 10,000 population

Over half (54 per cent) of respondents reported that there were staff in other parts of their council performing core communications functions. On average the number of these staff was 3.4 FTE and most were based in the web/digital communications team. Other teams where they were based included leisure, marketing, economic development, corporate services, print and design, and regulatory services. A full breakdown of the number and percentage of councils where staff in other teams are performing core communications functions and the average numbers of staff is shown in Table 8, and a list of the teams where they are based is shown in Table A2 in Annex A.

Table 8: Councils with staff in other teams performing core communications functions and average FTE			
	Number	**Per cent**	**Average FTE**
Shire County	9	69	3.9
Shire District	50	63	1.2
Unitary Authority	20	59	1.9
Metropolitan District	8	57	2.7
London Borough	4	36	0.8
Combined Fire Authority	0	0	0.0
All	91	54	3.4

Base = 169

Seventy per cent of respondents reported to a service head or director, a quarter (25 per cent) reported to the chief executive or equivalent and five per cent had another officer as their line manager. Table 9 shows these findings and lists of the service heads and directors, and the other line managers reported to are shown in Table A3 in Annex A.

Table 9: Heads of Communications' line managers		
	Number	**Per cent**
Chief executive	44	25
Service head/director	122	70
Other	8	5

Base = 174

Around a third (35 per cent) of Heads of Communications sit on their council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent. This proportion was highest for those in London Boroughs and Combined Fire Authorities where half (50 per cent) of respondents sit on their corporate/senior management team or equivalent and it was lowest for those in unitary authorities where it was a quarter (24 per cent). A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Percentage of Heads of Communications sitting on councils' corporate/senior management team or equivalent.		
	Number	**Per cent**
London Borough	6	50
Combined Fire Authority	9	50
Metropolitan Districts	7	47
Shire Counties	6	46
Shire Districts	25	30
Unitary Authorities	8	24
All	61	35

Base = 174

The overall average non-staffing budget for corporate communications, covering the core functions as outlined above, was £141,046 and the median was £54,850. By type of authority these figures ranged from an average £42,257 and a median of £25,000 in shire districts to an average of £366,917 and a median of £165,000 in metropolitan districts. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Non-staffing budget for corporate communications in pounds		
	Average	**Median**
Shire County	284,444	200,000
Shire District	42,257	25,000
London Borough	317,625	181,000
Metropolitan District	366,917	165,000
Unitary Authority	176,831	27,500
Combined Fire Authority	48,547	33,350
All	141,046	54,850

Base = 112

Almost all corporate communications teams in respondent councils covered media relations (98 per cent), Crisis/emergency communications (97 per cent), web/digital /social media communications (96 per cent) internal communications (95 per cent), reputation management (94 per cent), and campaign and marketing (91 per cent). A smaller proportion delivered print/design (78 per cent) and the services delivered by the lowest proportion were commercial marketing (38 per cent), public affairs (30 per cent), policy (21 per cent) and other services (15 per cent). These findings are shown in Table 12 and a list of the other services provided is shown in Table A4 of Annex A.

Table 12: Services delivered by corporate communications teams		
	Number	**Per cent**
Media relations	167	98
Crisis/emergency communications	165	97
Web/digital/social media communications	163	96
Internal communications	161	95
Reputation management	159	94
Campaign and marketing	155	91
Print/design	132	78
Commercial Marketing	64	38
Public Affairs	51	30
Policy	36	21
Other	26	15

Base = 170

The areas of professional development most commonly identified by respondents as priorities for their communications team(s) over the next 12 months were digital skills (62 per cent), video skills (56 per cent) and evaluation and insight (48 per cent). The areas least identified as a priority were campaigns and marketing (26 per cent), media handling (16 per cent) and other areas (six per cent). Only four per cent of respondents did not have any areas of professional development that were a priority over the next 12 months. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 13 and the other areas are listed in Table A5 of Annex A.

Table 13: Priority areas of professional development over the next 12 months		
	Number	Per cent
Digital skills	106	62
Video skills	96	56
Evaluation and insight	82	48
Income generation	67	39
Behaviour change	60	35
Crisis/emergency communications	47	28
Leadership skills	48	28
Place branding	48	28
Campaigns and marketing	44	26
Media handling	27	16
Other	10	6
None	7	4

Base = 170

Overall, 28 per cent of respondents will have their non-staffing budgets reduced in 2018/19. The proportion of councils facing budget reductions was lowest for shire districts at 12 per cent and highest among shire counties at 69 per cent. There is a full breakdown of these figures shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Councils' whose non-staffing budgets are being reduced in 2018/19		
	Number	Per cent
Shire County	9	69
Shire District	9	12
London Borough	4	36
Metropolitan District	4	29
Unitary Authority	15	47
Combined Fire Authority	4	27
All	45	28

Base = 162 of which 41 answered 'don't know'

Over half (56 per cent) of respondents were planning on generating income during 2018/19, most commonly through advertising revenue or by providing their services

commercially. Table 15 shows these findings and a list of all the income generation plans is shown in Table A6 of Annex A.

Table 15: Whether councils plan to generate income in 2018/19		
	Number	Per cent
Yes	91	56
No	57	35
Don't know	15	9

Base = 163

When asked if they already carried advertising as a source of income generation 58 per cent reported that did. Of these, a third (35 per cent) carried advertising in council publications, a quarter (25 per cent) on roundabouts and 12 per cent on their website. These findings are shown in Table 1and a list of the other answers specified is shown in Table A7 in Annex A.

Table 16: Whether councils carry advertising as a source of income generation		
	Number	Per cent
Publications	60	35
Roundabouts	43	25
Website	20	12
Vehicles	14	8
Digital signage	10	14
e-bulletins	9	5
Other	7	4
None of the above	72	42
Total who carry advertising	98	58

Base = 170

Respondents who carried advertising were asked if it had met their expectations as a revenue stream and source of income, and whether they had joined with other councils to carry advertising. Just over half (54 per cent) said it had met their expectations, a quarter (24 per cent) said it had not and 22 per cent did not know. When asked if they had joined with other councils to carry advertising, only six per cent had while 92 per cent had not. These findings are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Advertising as a source of income generation				
	Had it met their expectations as a revenue stream and source of income?		Had they joined with other local authorities to carry advertising?	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Yes	47	54	5	6
No	21	24	81	92
Don't know	19	22	2	2

Base = 87 and 88

Half (48 per cent) of respondents regularly work closely with their communication counterparts in partner organisations such as police, fire or Clinical Commissioning Group. A quarter (26 per cent) did so sometimes, 18 per cent when necessary and four per cent, infrequently. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Whether respondents work closely with their communication counterparts in partner organisations		
	Number	Per cent
Yes, regularly	79	48
Yes, sometimes	42	26
Yes, when necessary	30	18
Yes, infrequently	6	4
No	6	4

Base = 163

The most common ways that they worked together were joint campaigns (72 per cent), regular meetings (68 per cent) and mutual aid during crisis (59 per cent). A breakdown of these findings shown in Table 19 and a list of the other ways they work together is shown in Table A8 in Annex A.

Table 19: Ways that communications teams work with partner organisations		
	Number	Per cent
Joint campaigns	113	72
Regular meetings	107	68
Mutual aid during crisis	92	59
Shared resources	20	13
Shared staff	8	5
Joint budgets	5	3
Other	12	8

Base = 157

When asked whether they intended to work more closely with partner organisations in the coming twelve months 70 per cent of respondents said they did, 12 per cent did not and 17 per cent didn't know. These findings are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Whether respondents intend to work more closely with partner organisations		
	Number	Per cent
Yes	117	70
No	20	12
Don't know	29	17

Base = 166

Sixty per cent of respondents' organisations had a corporate narrative, as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Whether respondents' organisations have a corporate narrative	Number	Per cent
Yes	98	60
No	66	40

Base = 164

A third (34 per cent) of respondents reported that their organisation have an annual campaign plan signed off by their senior leadership, the most common themes for these were waste/recycling, health and wellbeing, economic development/growth and fostering. These findings are shown in Table 22 and a list of the most recent or future campaign themes can be found in Table A9 in Annex A.

Table 22: Whether respondents' organisations have an annual campaign plan signed off by their senior leadership	Number	Per cent
Yes	56	34
No	107	66

Base = 163

Almost all (99 per cent) of respondents use Twitter to share news and information with residents. The next most used communication channels were stories in local media and Facebook which were both used by 96 per cent of respondents and face to face meetings (74 per cent). A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 23 and a full list of the other communication channels used is shown in Table A10 in Annex A.

Table 23: Communication channels used by respondents	Number	Per cent
Twitter	163	99
Stories in local media	158	96
Facebook	158	96
Face to face meetings	122	74
YouTube	120	73
E-bulletins	104	63
Council magazine (print)	79	48
Instagram	75	45
Council magazine (digital)	67	41
Snapchat	7	4
Other	16	10

Base = 165

More than half (54 per cent) of respondents use digital analytics to evaluate the effectiveness/impact of their communications channels and/or campaigns, a quarter (23 per cent) measure it through levels of behaviour change/take up, while both surveys and media monitoring were used by a fifth (21 per cent). There is a breakdown of these findings shown in Table 24 and a list of all the other measures used is shown in Table A11 in Annex A.

Table 24: Measures used to evaluate effectiveness /impact of communications channels and/or campaigns		
	Number	**Per cent**
Digital analytics - website, social media	88	54
Behaviour change/take up	37	23
Surveys	35	21
Media monitoring	34	21
Success against objective	26	16
Engagement	21	13
Feedback	13	8
By individual campaign/channel	11	7
Focus groups	7	4
Government Communications Service framework	6	4
None	5	3
Other	33	20

Base = 162

Half (49 per cent) of respondents conduct a residents' or reputational survey to determine how their communities access news about the organisation, and their satisfaction with it. Of these, one-third (36 per cent) conducted it annually, 29 per cent did it every two years, five per cent did quarterly, four per cent did it twice a year, another four per cent did it every three years, and 15 per cent did it on an ad hoc basis. A further six per cent of respondents conducted their survey at another frequency. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 25 and a list of the other frequencies can be found in Table A12 in Annex A

Table 25: Frequency of residents' surveys		
	Number	**Per cent**
Yearly	28	36
Biennially	23	29
Quarterly	4	5
Twice a year	3	4
Triennially	3	4
As required/no regular plan	12	15
Other	5	6

Base = 78

Of those authorities who conducted a survey 47 per cent carried it out in-house, 46 per cent used an independent polling company and six per cent had it carried out by other organisations. These findings are shown in Table 26 and a list of the other organisations used is shown in Table A13 in Annex A.

Table 26: The organisations who carry out the reputational survey	Number	Per cent
Independent polling company	36	46
Own authority	37	47
Other	5	6

Base = 78

The most common method used to carry out the survey was online, used by 53 per cent of respondents, a third (34 per cent) used postal surveys while telephone and face-to-face surveys were both used by a quarter (27 per cent). A fifth (19 per cent) of respondents used citizens' juries/panels and four per cent used other types of survey. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 27 and a list of the other survey methods is shown in Table A14 in Annex A.

Table 27: Types of residents' or reputational survey	Number	Per cent
Online	42	53
Postal	27	34
Face-to-face	21	27
Telephone	21	27
Citizens' jury/panel	15	19
Other	3	4

Base = 79

A fifth (18 per cent) of respondents upload the results of their survey to LG Inform, the LGA's online benchmarking tool. The most common reasons why respondents did not upload their results were that they did not know about LG Inform (48 per cent) and that it was not a priority (14 per cent). A further 11 per cent did not know why they don't upload their results. These findings are shown in Tables 28 and 29, and a list of the other reasons provided is shown in Table A15 in Annex A.

Table 28: Whether respondents upload the results of their residents' survey to LG Inform	Number	Per cent
Yes	14	18
No	65	82

Base = 79

Table 29: The main reasons respondents don't upload their residents' survey results to LG Inform		
	Number	Per cent
Do not know about LG Inform	31	48
Not a priority	9	14
Our data does not comply with LG Inform standards	5	8
Too time-consuming	1	2
Do not think it is worthwhile	1	2
Our data is not in correct format	1	2
Difficult to use LG inform	0	0
Too complicated	0	0
Too technical	0	0
The output is not helpful	0	0
Other (please specify)	10	15
Don't know	7	11

Base = 65

Respondents from councils who did not conduct a residents' or reputational survey were asked to indicate the main reason why they did not carry one out, 41 per cent said that it was too expensive, 16 per cent said that there was no senior support for it within the council and six per cent said that they did not think it was a worthwhile exercise. Just over a third (37 per cent) of respondents had not done a survey for other reasons, these included monitoring resident satisfaction through smaller surveys and being in the process of planning to do a survey. Table 30 shows these findings and a full list of the other reasons for not conducting a survey is shown in Table A16 in Annex A.

Table 30: Reasons for not conducting a residents' or reputational survey		
	Number	Per cent
Would like to but it is too expensive	33	41
No senior support within the council	13	16
Do not think it is a worthwhile exercise	5	6
Other	30	37

Base = 81

Respondents were asked to identify up to three main priorities for communications in their authority. A third (64 per cent) cited their reputation, just over half (55 per cent) chose resident engagement while both behaviour change and economic development were cited by 38 per cent of respondents. A full breakdown of these findings are shown in Table 31 and a list of the other priorities specified is shown in Table A17 in Annex A.

Table 31: Main priorities for communications		
	Number	Per cent
Council reputation	103	64
Resident engagement	89	55
Behaviour change	62	38
Economic development	61	38
Partnership working	39	24
Place branding	37	23
Marketing income-generating services (e.g. leisure, tourism)	25	15
Communications and budget reductions	23	14
Crisis communication	21	13
Other	13	8

Base = 162

Most respondents (89 per cent) were aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils and of these three quarters (74 per cent) had used that support in the last 12 months. The most commonly used types of support were LGA website which was used by half (49 per cent) of those who took advantage of LGA support, CommsNet bulletin (45 per cent) and CommsHub communication resources (22 per cent). These findings are shown in Table 32 and the other types of support specified are shown in Table A18 in Annex A.

Table 32: Types of LGA communications support used in the last 12 months		
	Number	Per cent
LGA website	68	49
CommsNet bulletin	63	45
CommsHub communication resources	31	22
Attended workshops or event	26	19
One day health check	14	10
Two – three day communications reviews	12	9
Strategic support	6	4
Media training	4	3
Participated in LGA improvement work	4	3
Recruitment assistance	0	0
Other	7	5
None in the last 12 months	37	26

Base = 140

Four-fifths (82 per cent) of those who had used LGA support were satisfied (44 per cent - very, 38 per cent - fairly) with the service provided, 16 per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and three per cent didn't know their level of satisfaction. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Satisfaction with support provided		
	Number	Per cent
Very satisfied	45	44
Fairly satisfied	39	38
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16	16
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	0	0
Don't know	3	3

Base = 103

A third (31 per cent) found the ease of communication the most positive aspect of the support they received, this was followed by the LGA's professionalism (29 per cent), the quality and detail of feedback (16 per cent) and value for money (15 per cent). A quarter (24 per cent) of respondents stated that they didn't feel any aspect of the support was the least positive while among those who were able to provide an answer bespoke support was most the commonly cited option, with ten per cent of choosing this option. Table 34 shows a full breakdown of these findings and a list of the other answers provided is shown in Table A19 in Annex A.

Table 34: Most and least positive aspects of the support provided				
	Most positive		Least positive	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Ease of communication	44	31	1	1
Professionalism	40	29	1	1
Quality and detail of feedback	22	16	4	3
Value for money	21	15	0	0
Speed of response to enquiry	14	10	0	0
Bespoke support	14	10	14	10
Other	8	6	9	6
Nothing	6	4	34	24

Base = 140

When asked to indicate which types of support they would find most useful over the next twelve months 44 per cent answered case studies/online resources, 41 per cent wanted training/professional development and 40 per cent chose events/ seminars. A quarter (25 per cent) wanted a one-day health-check of their council's communications while 23 per cent would like bespoke support via email/telephone when required. Options other than those listed in the question were selected by six per cent of respondents and another six per cent indicated that they would not find any support useful over the next twelve months. These findings are shown in Table 35 and the other types of support specified are shown in Table A20 in Annex A.

Table 35: Types of communications support respondents would find most useful over the next twelve months	Number	Per cent
Case studies/Online resources	71	44
Training / professional development	66	41
Events/seminars	64	40
One-day health-check of your council's communications	40	25
Bespoke support via email/telephone when required	37	23
Contact building with other councils	27	17
Two- or three-day strategic review of your council's communications	21	13
Crisis communications support	19	12
Visit from a member of the LGA communications team	14	9
Other	9	6
None of the above	9	6

Base = 162

Just under seven in ten (68 per cent) of respondents were willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils, which help to carry out peer reviews among other things.

Additional comments received included feedback on support provided by the LGA, further information on areas covered by the survey, and information on individual respondents' organisational situations. These are shown in Table A21 in Annex A.

Annex A

Answers provided to open text questions

Table A1: Other professional organisations
Chartered Institute of Marketing (x 10)
BCS (British Computer Society)
CAM (Cambridge Academy of Management)
CiB (British Association of Communicators in Business)
CILEx (Chartered Institute of Legal Executives)
CommsCymru
GCS (Government Communication Service)
ICS (Institute of Customer Service)
IRRV (Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation)
Liza Greaves' PR Network
SOCITM (Society of Information Technology Management)
Solace (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers)

Table A2: Other teams where staff are performing core communications functions
Web Team (including digital/social media)/ICT (x 45)
Leisure (x 21)
Economic Development/Regeneration (x 9)
Corporate Services (x 8)
Marketing (x 7)
Print and design (x 6)
Regulatory Services (x 6)
Children's services (x 5)
Customer services (x 5)
Fostering and adoption (x 4)
HR (x 4)
Community Services (x 3)
Fire (x 2)
Housing (x 2)
Commercial unit
Divisional

Education and Marketing Officer in the Countryside team
Paid for by other directorates but based with Comms
Various settings generally on a project basis.
We encourage teams to manage the relevant web pages about their service in terms of content which we then plain English and approve before it goes live simply as there are so many of them
Within services

Table A3: Heads of communications' line managers
Service heads/directors
Director/Head of Service - unspecified (x 33)
Assistant/Deputy Chief Executive (x 9)
Strategy/Policy (x 15)
Corporate Services (x 8)
Customer Services (x 5)
Human Resources (x 5)
Legal Services (x 5)
Finance (x 4)
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (x 3)
Business Improvement/Support (x3)
Communications (x 4)
ICT and Customer Services (x 3)
Service Development/Reform (x 4)
Communities (x 3)
Resources (x 2)
Corporate Director (Governance)
Democratic Services
Director of Central Services
Director of Performance and Intelligence
Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications
Director of Prevent and Protect
Director of Regeneration
Head of Coastal Management
Head of Community Safety
Head of Corporate and Community Services
Head of Organisational Assurance
Head of People & Performance
Head of Risk Management

Other line managers
Service manager (x 2)
Group Commander
Group Manager people and performance
Improvement and Organisational Development Manager
Performance and Improvement Manager
Policy & Partnerships Manager
Press Officer reports to CEO, others to operations manager

Table A4: Other services delivered by corporate communications teams
Community engagement (x 9)
Consultation (x 8)
Event support (x 7)
Editorial/Design Services (x 3)
Filming/videography (x 2)
Income generation (x 2)
Member support (x 2)
Advertising
branding
Communications Training
Surveys
Tourism
Traded services for print, design and advertising
Venue management

Table A5: Other priority areas of professional development
Content development
Copywriting
Council mergers
Currently in consultation
Engagement and consultation
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Internal communications
Measurement
Writing, design evaluation

Table A6: Income generation plans in corporate communications for 2018/19
Advertising - publications, website, posters and sponsorship (x 50)
Providing communications services to other organisations (x 31)
Outsourcing/partnering with other organisations (x 17)
Providing print and design services (x 15)
Providing filming/location services (x 6)
Events (x 4)
Providing media training (x 2)
Buy in resource from another Council (for strategic comms)
Consultancy/Toolkit product and support for traded marketing across the council.
Increase non-direct income through behaviour change
Via further work on asset advertising

Table A7: Other places where respondents carry advertising
Events (x 2)
Bus shelters
Film requests
Lamp-posts
Payslips
Poster boards
Roundabouts
Street level adverts both large and small format

Table A8: Internal resource required to set up and maintain advertising
Media issues/enquiries (x 3)
Providing cover – busy periods/holidays (x 2)
Emergency response
Infrequent emails if topic requires
Joint responsive communications.
Resilience planning for emergencies
Secondment
Supporting campaigns as opposed to joint ones, joint works tends to focused on one off events or projects where we will do joint preleases or artwork.
We manage and deliver comms for the CCG

Table A9: Most recent or future campaign themes
Waste/recycling (x 18)
Health and Wellbeing (x 13)
Economic Development/Growth (x 11)
Fostering (x 9)
Community safety (x 8)
Litter/Fly-tipping (x 8)
Environmental issues (x 7)
Pride in local area (x 7)
Channel shift/going digital (x 6)
Housing/Homelessness (x 6)
Recruitment (x 6)
Budget/Council Tax (x 5)
Marketing local area (x 5)
Regeneration (x 5)
Children's services (x 4)
Fire safety (x 4)
Internal council campaigns (x 4)
Local plan (x 4)
Leisure (x 4)
Tourism/Events (x 4)
Anti-social behaviour/Street begging (x 2)
Clean Air (x 2)
Community engagement/involvement (x 2)
Corporate Plan (x 2)
Domestic abuse (x 2)
Jobs, skills and apprenticeships (x 2)
Mental Health (x 2)
Transformation (x 2)
Universal credit (x 2)
Broadband
Building Control
Cashless car parking payment service
CFOA set a calendar of safety weeks throughout the year which we follow
Coastal adaptation for communities

Table A9: Most recent or future campaign themes - continued
Devolution
Dog Fouling
Educational attainment
Highways & transport
HQ relocation
Infrastructure investment
Local airport
Loneliness and Isolation,
Modern and efficient council
New energy company
Parking issues when fire appliances cant get through
Road safety
Saving hospitals services from cuts
Schools investment and funding
Shared prosperity
Summer messaging - EH
Value for money
Water safety
Winter messaging - EH

Table A5: Other communication channels used by respondents
Council website/online platform (x 6)
Leaflets (x 3)
Outdoor advertising spaces - posters, digital displays (x 3)
Community media
Council App
Direct marketing
Partners
Council Newsroom
Targeted email, advertising, traditional collateral
Webcast selected meetings or those of high interest

Table A11: Other measures used to evaluate the effectiveness / impact of communications channels and/or campaigns
Market research (x 3)
Return on media investment (x 3)
Internally (x 2)
Reputation monitoring (x 2)
Also starting to benchmark across other LAs and organisations. These are areas that we are looking to develop.
Annual resident and partner consultations
Basic monitoring
Due to resources, this function forms part of an agreement with a partner Council to provide this information
Evaluation form
Evaluation tools in place for all major campaigns
Face-to-face evaluation interviews
Internal comms audit,
Limited evaluation but some focused activity on specific campaigns across all channels
Multiple methods using the Barcelona Principles
Needs to improve
Not very well....
Per month
Professional awards
Pulse' checks
Quantitative data
Satisfaction ratings
Socitm ratings
This is ad hoc and something we need to improve massively.
Variety of methodologies but always include outcomes in addition to outputs
Variety of on and offline metrics
Very ad hoc at the moment; this is a key area for improvement in the next year
Very limited. This is changing as part of restructure and refocusing of the team.

Table A6: Other frequencies of residents' surveys
We carry out an IPSOS Mori face to face survey every 2-3 years and supplement with research as required
Often yearly but sometimes biennially

Table A13: Other organisations who carry out residents' or reputational surveys

Other council (x 3)
Mix of independent polling and in-house
Varies

Table A14: Other types of residents' or reputational survey

Various (x 2)
Printed in council magazine

Table A15: Other reasons respondents do not upload their residents' survey results to LG Inform

Plan to in future (x 5)
For internal use
Never considered it
New partnership and subject specific
Not enough date yet- new initiative
We are currently running the fieldwork for the first survey since 2012, so this will be first opportunity to upload the data to LG inform.

Table A16: Other reasons for not conducting residents' or reputational survey

It is not conducted on a regular basis (x 6)
Planning to conduct one (x 4)
A combination of the three options provided (x 2)
Lack of capacity (x 2)
As a fire service we do carry out 'hot strikes' and also enforcements. neither, as yet, are qualified by measurement. we do also do 'safe & well' visits - approx 20,000 p/a which we are only just beginning to understand the satisfaction - mainly through sentiment analysis
Done previously and now have a variety of means for obtaining resident views rather than one single borough wide survey
I am new to role, so it is something we may be looking at
It is a part of our annual budget consultation
Not a council
Not covered in the SLA
Not yet prioritised

Table A16: Other reasons for not conducting residents' or reputational survey - continued
There is an annual tracker survey linked to community safety that does ask benchmark questions about council satisfaction but not directly on how people wish to receive news. I conducted a survey this year but there won't be budget for an annual one. Once we have implemented a newsletter we can hopefully add one or two core questions to the main tracker survey.
Variety of reasons
We carried out two surveys with LGA support in connection with the merger
We conduct a face to face survey at annual roadshows
We consult on operational issues but not satisfaction levels
We have dialogue throughout the year with residents
We hold public consultations, but not resident surveys

Table A17: Other main priorities for communications
Community safety (x 2)
Core service offer and staff comms
Doing things 'with not to' local people
Employee engagement/ culture change
Improve residents' safety, promote the work of the fire and Rescue Service in their communities
improved digital info and services
Internal communication
Major capital projects
Media relations in a changing landscape
Service design
Staff engagement

Table A18: Other types of communications support used in the last 12 months
Telephone conversations (x 2)
Conducted a one day health check for another council.
Intensive help with reputational management
Request for aid when possible crisis looming
The council connects with the LGA as part of the improvement panel activity
We have had great support on the merger proposal

Table A19: Other most and least positive aspects of support provided
Most positive
Benefit of being part of a network
Best practice material
Can't recall
Clear guidance
Extent of resource available
None of the above
Not used in the six months I've been in post
Usefulness generally
Least positive
Can't recall
Distance from SW
Image library used did not have comprehensive library of images, but guess this is a developing resource
More time speaking to whole Comms Team - some staff had 5 mins!
No one came back to me after the original call explaining the issue.
Some feedback would be helpful
The website used to be more valuable - doesn't seem to be updated as regularly anymore?
Unable to book place on Academy this year for any of the communications team as first day booked - and, if making the journey, would have preferred to attend whole conference. May I please suggest that if places are limited, there are initially restrictions on the number of people attending from each authority, until everyone has a chance to send at least one delegate.
Understanding of our authority and specific needs

Table A20: Other types of communications support respondents would find most useful over the next twelve months
Bespoke programme already being put together for us - thank you!
Copywriting skills for comms officers
Events in regions please - we have no budget for travel
More budget so we can benefit from these things
My understanding is that all these services come at a cost
Networking or online system we could see what councils might need our services we're selling.
Recruitment support
This will be a decision for the new head of communications when she starts in December.
Webinars - hard to travel but easy online!!

Table A21: Additional comments
Feedback on support provided by LGA
I find the guidance documents you produce, the best practice sharing and networking opportunities very valuable.
The LGA has been instrumental in providing us with extremely valuable Comms support over the past two years. This is very much appreciated.
The LGA review was extremely useful and has helped us to shape our approach to Comms and marketing.
We have had immense support as we progressed with the single new council proposal. This has been very valued and I have learned a great deal as a result.
Further information on areas covered by the survey
Happy to support with media training and crisis comms
I would love to take part in Peer Reviews but because of other responsibilities as well as Communications I just couldn't spare the time.
My response to Q26 is subject to availability but I would be interested
Re Q26 - I would have answered yes if I had more time. I'd like to think that next year, when I am more settled here, I will answer yes to that question.
While we would love to be involved in peer review activity we have so little capacity that this would be very difficult.
Information about individual respondents' organisational situations
I am an interim staff member
I am new to role at *<council name>,* I would welcome partnership and comms supports, and similar also open to engaging and supporting the LGA in the future, but when I have been here a little longer.
I'm at a district with limited resources, and a traditional outlook on the role of communications - both among officers and members - which needs addressing. Getting the organisation to value the wider communications function - not just the team - is probably my main challenge.
NB - we don't have a head of communications. This post, and the head of marketing, was deleted several years ago. We have three service managers (media, digital media and communications and marketing (including print and design) who report to a divisional director. It would have been useful to have the opportunity to share our structure so that this could be compared with other similar councils…
We currently have a vacancy in Communications and the management is carried out by a general manager and not a communications specialist.
Comments/suggestions on the survey
…It would also have been good to have had a question about the specific service areas (public health, sports, regeneration etc) that require most comms/marketing activity rather than the broad priorities that were given.
Other comments
It feels that there is a weight of expectation on the marketing and communications service that isn't supported by budget or recognition. When something fails suddenly eyes turn to the service but there is a reluctance to listen to the advice being given to prevent the issue in the first place

Table A21: Additional comments - continued
Other comments
Membership of a professional organisation (CIPR or PRCA) should be a mandatory requirement for local government communications practitioners, many of who are 'shooed in' to communications from other backgrounds. Continuous professional development should also be a mandatory requirement. It is time for local government communications to move away from its fixation on reputation to focussing on service delivery and 'mirroring' of community aspiration. If we don't take our profession seriously, how can we expect our corporate management teams to?
The LGA often seems unaware of the individual additional skills local Comms heads have - for example I have 20 years as a TV presenter and TV journalist which means I offer excellent presentation/social media and member training - hence us now offering this as a service externally for 2018. When I was at *<council name>* the LGA did some training that I was told (this may not be the case) cost *<monetary amount>* so tbh I am a little confused about what the LGA offers as part of its membership and what it charges?? Increasingly the better salaries come through being freelance consultants rather than staff particularly as the main goals are now income generation, sponsorship etc...so the face of Comms is changing to attract external and highly qualified (in terms of commercial experience) people who can not only do Comms but take the strategic lead and I am not sure that this is recognised from the top down. As is often the case, it is the smaller councils in *<county name>* taking the lead with County Council often left behind in terms of understanding what we do - this leads to increasing disparity rather than conformity. The Comms closed group on Facebook for example is far more effective for finding out information, testing ideas, etc. than any other paid-for means. Hope this helps
There are an increasing number of coastal partnerships. Their communications may not be led by their local council communications teams, often these partnerships have their own communications professionals, representing more than one council. Their views should be included in future surveys. Partnership working and good, professional compelling and evidence led communications are extremely important when engaging with coastal communities. We are often required to strike a balance between delivering complex evidence and data and the need to find a common language to make sense of this to our vulnerable coastal communities. Establishing a two-way symmetrical dialogue is ever more important as is having suitably trained communications professionals to plan and deliver this work.
We just had a peer review - comms not even mentioned / interviewed / involved / represented in peer teams

Annex B

Survey form and notes of guidance

LGA HEADS OF COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY 2017

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

- You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page, you will have to answer all the questions on each page before you can progress.
- Use the 'Previous' button if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.
- If you stop before completing the survey, you can return to the survey using the link supplied in the e-mail and you will be able to continue from where you left off.
- To ensure your answers have been saved, click on the 'Next' button at the bottom of the page that you were working on before exiting.
- The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on the answers you provide.
- Please note that the survey link is unique to you, do not pass it on to anyone else as any answers they provide will overwrite anything you have submitted.
- All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA.

Please complete the survey by Friday 17 November 2017.

If you have any technical queries about the survey, please contact Helen Wilkinson on 020 7664 3181 or helen.wilkinson@local.gov.uk.

Please amend your contact details as necessary, and add your job title if the box is empty.

Name   _____
Authority   _____
Job title   _____
Email   _____

Q1 - Please indicate your gender

❍ Male
❍ Female
❍ Prefer not to say

Q2 - What is your ethnic group?

Please choose the option that best describes your ethnic group or background

◯ White
◯ English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
◯ Irish
◯ Gypsy or Irish Traveller
◯ Any other White background

◯ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
◯ White and Black Caribbean
◯ White and Black African
◯ White and Asian
◯ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

◯ Asian / Asian British
◯ Indian
◯ Pakistani
◯ Bangladeshi
◯ Chinese
◯ Any other Asian background

◯ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
◯ African
◯ Caribbean
◯ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background

◯ Other ethnic group
◯ Arab
◯ Any other ethnic group

◯ Prefer not to say

Q3 - Please indicate your age group

◯ Under 25 years
◯ 25-34 years
◯ 35-49 years
◯ 50-64 years
◯ 65 years or over
◯ Prefer not to say

Q4 - How many years have you worked in local government communications?

 Years _____

Q5 - Are you a member of a professional organisation?

❑ Yes, I am a member of LGcommunications
❑ Yes, I am a member of PRCA
❑ Yes, I am a member of CIPR
❑ Yes, I am a member of another organisation (please specify)_____
❍ No, I am not

Q6 - How many staff were employed in your authority's corporate communications team performing core functions at 1 October 2017?

Core functions are defined as media relations, crisis communications, campaigns, marketing, reputation management, internal communications, print/design, and web/digital/social media communications. Please enter the number in full-time equivalent terms. If you do not know, please enter DK.

FTE staff _____

Q7 - Are there other staff performing any of these core communications functions in other parts of your authority (e.g. web, marketing teams)?

❍ Yes (please specify where)_____
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q7a - Please indicate how many staff were performing these functions in other parts of the authority at 1 October 2017.

Please enter the number in full-time equivalent terms. If you do not know, please enter DK.

FTE staff _____

Q8 - Who is your line manager?

❍ Chief executive (or equivalent)
❍ Service head/director (please specify)_____
❍ Other (please specify)_____

Q9 - Do you sit on your council's corporate/senior management team or equivalent?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q10 - What is your authority's total non-staffing budget for communications in 2017/18?

This covers core functions, defined as media relations, crisis communications, campaigns, marketing, reputation management, internal communications, print/design, and web/digital/social media communications. If you do not know, please enter DK.

£ _____

Q11 - Which services does your communications team(s) currently deliver?

Please tick all that apply.

❑ Media relations
❑ Crisis/emergency communications
❑ Campaign and marketing
❑ Reputation management
❑ Internal communications
❑ Print/design
❑ Web/digital/social media communications
❑ Policy
❑ Public Affairs
❑ Commercial Marketing
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q12 - What professional development needs have you identified as priorities for your communications team(s) over the next twelve months?

❑ Crisis/emergency communications
❑ Leadership skills
❑ Media handling
❑ Evaluation and insight
❑ Behaviour change
❑ Digital skills
❑ Video skills
❑ Campaigns and marketing
❑ Income generation
❑ Place branding
❑ None
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q13 - Is your authority's non-staffing budget for communications being reduced in 2018/19?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

Q14 - Are you planning on generating income in 2017/2018?

Please tick all that apply.

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q14a - If yes, please can you provide more information about how you intend to generate income?

(E.g. share staff with other organisations, outsource communications services to other councils, staff reductions, increase advertising opportunities)

Q15 - Do you carry advertising on any of the following as a source of income generation?

❑ Website
❑ e-bulletins
❑ Vehicles
❑ Roundabouts
❑ Digital signage
❑ Publications
❑ Other (please specify)_____
❍ None of the above

Q15a - Has it met your expectations as a revenue stream and source of income?

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q15b - Have you joined with other local authorities to carry advertising?

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q16 - Do you currently work closely with your communication counterparts in partner organisations (e.g. police / fire/ Clinical Commissioning Group)

❍ Yes, regularly
❍ Yes, sometimes
❍ Yes, when necessary
❍ Yes, infrequently
❍ No

Q16a - If yes, how do you work together?

(Please tick all that apply)

❑ Joint campaigns
❑ Joint budgets
❑ Shared staff
❑ Shared resources
❑ Regular meetings
❑ Mutual aid during crisis
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q17 - Do you intend to work more closely with partner organisations in the coming twelve months?

❍ Yes
❍ No
❍ Don't know

Q18 - Does your organisation have a corporate narrative?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q19 - Does your organisation have an annual campaign plan signed off by your senior leadership?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q19a - Please provide details of your most recent or future campaign themes

(e.g. waste and recycling, social worker recruitment etc.)

Q20 - Which of the following communication channels does your council use to share news and information with residents

Please tick all that apply

❑ Council magazine (print)
❑ Council magazine (digital)
❑ Stories in local media
❑ E-bulletins
❑ Facebook
❑ Twitter
❑ Instagram
❑ Snapchat
❑ YouTube
❑ Face to face meetings
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q21 - How do you currently measure and evaluate the effectiveness / impact of your communications channels and/or campaigns

Q22 - Do you currently conduct a residents' or reputational survey to determine how your communities access news about your council and their satisfaction with it?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q22a - How often do you carry out the survey?

❍ Yearly
❍ Biennially
❍ Triennially
❍ As required/no regular plan
❍ Other (please specify)_____

Q22b - Please indicate who carries out the survey.

❍ Independent polling company
❍ Your council
❍ Other (please specify)_____

Q22c - What form(s) does the survey take?

❑ Online
❑ Face-to-face
❑ Postal
❑ Citizens' jury/panel
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q22d – Do you upload the results of your survey to LG Inform, the LGA's online benchmarking tool?

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q22e – Please indicate the main reason why you do not upload results to LG inform

❍ Too time-consuming
❍ Difficult to use LG inform
❍ Too complicated
❍ Too technical
❍ Do not think it is worthwhile
❍ Not a priority
❍ Our data is not in correct format
❍ Our data does not comply with LG Inform standards
❍ The output is not helpful
❍ Do not know about LG Inform
❍ Other (please specify)_____

Q22f - Please indicate the main reason why you do not carry out a residents' survey.

❍ Would like to but it is too expensive
❍ Do not think it is a worthwhile exercise
❍ No senior support within the council
❍ Other (please specify)_____

Q23 - Please indicate up to three main priorities for communications in your authority.

❑ Partnership working
❑ Council reputation
❑ Crisis communication
❑ Resident engagement
❑ Behaviour change
❑ Communications and budget reductions

❑ Place branding
❑ Economic development
❑ Marketing income-generating services (e.g. leisure, tourism)
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q24 - Are you aware that the LGA offers communications support to its member councils?

○ Yes
○ No

Q24a – Have you used any of the below communication support offers provided by the LGA in the last 12 months?

Please tick all that apply

❑ One day health check
❑ Two – three day communications reviews
❑ CommsHub communication resources
❑ LGA website
❑ CommsNet bulletin
❑ Recruitment assistance
❑ Strategic support
❑ Media training
❑ Attended workshops or event
❑ Participated in LGA improvement work
❑ Other (please specify)_____
○ None in the last 12 months

Q24b - How satisfied were you with the support provided?

○ Very satisfied
○ Fairly satisfied
○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
○ Fairly dissatisfied
○ Very dissatisfied
○ Don't know

Q24c - Which aspects of the support you have used were most positive?

❑ Speed of response to enquiry
❑ Ease of communication
❑ Professionalism
❑ Bespoke support
❑ Quality and detail of feedback
❑ Value for money
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q24d - Which aspects of the support you have used were least positive?

❑ Speed of response to enquiry
❑ Ease of communication
❑ Professionalism
❑ Bespoke support
❑ Quality and detail of feedback
❑ Value for money
❑ Other (please specify)_____

Q25 - What types of communications support would you find most useful over the next twelve months?

Please tick up to three items.

❑ Bespoke support via email/telephone when required
❑ Case studies/Online resources
❑ Crisis communications support
❑ Visit from a member of the LGA communications team
❑ Contact building with other councils
❑ One-day health-check of your council's communications
❑ Two- or three-day strategic review of your council's communications
❑ Events/seminars
❑ Training / professional development
❑ Other (please specify)_____
❍ None of the above

Q26 - Would you be willing to be involved in the LGA's pool of communications professionals to support councils? For example helping to carry out peer reviews

❍ Yes
❍ No

Q27 - Are you happy for your response to be shared with other local authorities on request?

❍ Yes, on a named basis
❍ Yes, but only anonymously
❍ No

Q28 - Please add any other comments you have on the topics covered by this survey.

Thank you very much for your help.